

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAMS**

**Henry School District
Continuous Improvement Monitoring Process Report 2004-2005**

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Dates of On Site Visit: October 4, 2004

Date of Report: October 5, 2004

This report contains the results of the steering committee's self-assessment and the validation of the self-assessment by the Special Education Programs. The report addresses six principles – General Supervision, Free Appropriate Public Education, Appropriate Evaluation, Procedural Safeguards, Individualized Education Program and Least Restrictive Environment. Each principle is rated based on the following scale:

Promising Practice	The district/agency exceeds this requirement through the implementation of innovative, high-quality programming and instructional practices.
Meets Requirements	The district/agency consistently meets this requirement.
Needs Improvement	The district/agency has met this requirement but has identified areas of weakness that left unaddressed may result in non-compliance.
Out of Compliance	The district/agency consistently does not meet this requirement.
Not applicable	In a small number of cases, the standard may not be applicable for your district/agency. If an item is not applicable, the steering committee should briefly explain why the item is NA. Example – no private schools within the district boundaries.

Principle 1 – General Supervision

General supervision means the school district's administrative responsibilities to ensure federal and state regulations are implemented and a free appropriate public education is provided for each eligible child with a disability. The specific areas addressed in principle one are child find, referral procedures, children voluntarily enrolled by parents in private schools, students placed by the school district, improving results through performance goals and indicators (assessment, drop out, graduation), professional development, suspension and expulsion rates.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- District/agency instructional staff information
- Suspension and expulsion information
- Statewide Assessment information
- Enrollment information
- Placement alternatives

- Disabling conditions
- Exiting information
- Parent survey, referrals, publications of child find notices
- Comprehensive plan
- Yearly child find results

Meets requirements

The steering committee concluded the district has procedures and a system for receiving documented referrals. A census of children birth through five years old is maintained by the district.

The Henry School District employees certified staff. Staff development and training is driven by the student's needs and disabilities. The special education staff attended training on autism, South Dakota Reads, DDN workshops and will be trained in the Boys Town Behavior program this summer. General education teachers received training in assisting students in the regular classroom before a referral is made. The paraprofessional attended TTL training, and has an associate degree. A regional in-service conducted in February addressed classes for paraprofessionals.

The district uses the relevant school data to analyze and review progress toward the state performance goals and indicators. A data retreat has been conducted with the curriculum director of Northeast Cooperative and the results have been presented to the school board.

Needs improvement

The steering committee concluded the middle school and high school teachers need to receive copies of the student's goals, objectives and modifications. Also, the general education staff needs more training and support to help implement student's IEPs.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting the requirements under general supervision as concluded by the steering committee.

Through interview and observation, the monitoring team could not validate the need for training and the to receive copies of student goals and modifications as areas in need of improvement. Special educators discussed individual IEP needs with the applicable general educator prior to the beginning of school. Copies of goal pages and modifications are provided to the student's teachers and the entire record is available for review. Due to the small size of the district, student/teacher needs are addressed informally on a daily basis. Since the data was collected for the self assessment, Northeast Educational Cooperative staff provided an in-service to all general educators covering the topic of modifications and other special education issues. General educators felt they had sufficient information and training to implement student IEPs.

Out of compliance

Issues requiring immediate attention

ARSD 24:05:22:03. Certified child. A certified child is a child in need of special education or special education and related services who has received a multidisciplinary evaluation and has an individual education program formulated and approved by a local placement committee. Documentation supporting a child's disabling condition as defined by Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act must be maintained by the school district for verification of its annual federal child count. This definition applies to all eligible children ages 3 to 21, inclusive, and to only those children under the age of 3 who are in need of prolonged assistance.

ARSD 24:05:24.01:31. IEP team override. If the IEP team determines that a student is eligible for special education or special education and related services because the student has a disability and needs special education even though the student does not meet specific eligibility requirements, the IEP team must include documentation in the record as follows:

(1) The record must contain documents that explain why the standards and procedures that are used with the majority of students resulted in invalid findings for this student;

(2) The record must indicate what objective data were used to conclude that the student has a disability and is in need of special education. These data may include test scores, work products, self-reports, teacher comments, previous tests, observational data, and other developmental data;

(3) Since the eligibility decision is based on a synthesis of multiple data and not all data are equally valid, the team must indicate which data had the greatest relative importance for the eligibility decision; and

(4) The IEP team override decision must include a sign-off by the IEP team members agreeing to the override decision. If one or more IEP team members disagree with the override decision, the record must include a statement of why they disagree signed by those members.

The district director of special education shall keep a list of students on whom the IEP team override criteria were used to assist the state in evaluating the adequacy of student identification criteria.

Through interview and review of student records, the monitoring team found insufficient data to support eligibility for two students placed through override procedures. The override did not explain why the standards and procedures used with the majority of students resulted in invalid findings for the student. The objective data simply stated, "Functional assessments and teacher reports and observations." The data with the greatest relative importance also stated, "Functional assessments and teacher reports and observations." The district currently has three students receiving special education service through the placement committee override process. The IEP team must meet and review the eligibility of these 3 students and ensure adequate override documentation is available in the student record.

Principle 2 – Free Appropriate Public Education

All eligible children with disabilities are entitled to a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment. The specific areas addressed in principle two are the provision of FAPE to children residing in group homes, foster homes, or institutions, making FAPE available when a child reaches his/her 3rd birthday and providing FAPE to eligible children with disabilities who have been suspended or expelled from school for more than 10 cumulative days.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- State tables
- Number of students screened
- Preschool age
- School age
- Budget information
- Surveys
- Age at referral
- Personnel development education
- Personnel training
- Comprehensive plan

Meets requirements

The steering committee concluded current practices and past reviews from the state and federal special education monitoring demonstrated the school district provides a FAPE for all children with disabilities.

The district comprehensive plan addresses the procedures implemented to assure all children receive a free appropriate public education.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting the requirements under free appropriate public education as concluded by the steering committee.

Principle 3 – Appropriate Evaluation

A comprehensive evaluation is conducted by a team of knowledgeable staff, which also includes parental input. A valid and reliable evaluation will result in effective individualized education programs for eligible students. The specific areas addressed in principle three are written notice and consent for evaluation, evaluation procedures and instruments, eligibility determination, reevaluation and continuing eligibility.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- State tables
- Teacher file reviews
- Surveys
- Comprehensive plan
- Parent teacher report forms
- Initial referral

Meets requirements

The steering committee concluded the Henry School District adheres to all the requirements of written prior notice. Parents receive written notice/consent for evaluation within the required timelines and the district adheres to the procedures for interim placements. Students are assessed in all areas specified on the prior notice. Transition evaluations are conducted for students prior to turning 16 years old.

Needs improvement

The steering committee concluded all areas of suspected disability need to be addressed during the evaluation process.

Out of compliance

The steering committee concluded functional assessment needs to be consistently administered in all skill areas affected by the disability and summarized into a written report.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees the district adheres to all the requirements written prior notice. Parents receive written notice/consent for evaluation within the required timelines. The district adheres to the

procedures for interim placements and transition evaluations are conducted for students turning 16 years old.

Through interview and a review of student records, the monitoring team consistently found functional assessment administered in all skill areas affected by the disability and documented into a written report. This area meets requirement.

Needs improvement

Through interview and a review of student records the monitoring team agrees all areas of suspected disability need to be addressed during the evaluation process as indicated on the prior notice. Prior notice/consent for evaluation stated the area of behavior was to be assessed, but there was no evidence an evaluation was administered.

Principle 4 – Procedural Safeguards

Parents of children with disabilities have certain rights available. The school makes parents aware of these rights and makes sure they are understood. The specific areas addressed in principle four are adult student/transfer of rights, content of rights, consent, written notice, confidentiality and access to records, independent educational evaluation (IEE), complaint procedures, and due process hearings.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- State tables
- Surveys
- Parental right document
- Public awareness information
- Teacher file reviews
- Comprehensive plan
- Consent and prior notice forms
- FERPA disclosure

Meets requirements

The steering committee concluded parent rights brochures contain all required content. Parental rights information is given to parents with every prior notice/consent sent and at every IEP team meeting. The district's prior notice/consent document contains all required information. Consent is acquired for the initial provision of special education services.

Needs improvement

The steering committee concluded a list of individuals who would serve as a surrogate parent if needed needs to be developed.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting requirement under procedural safeguards as concluded by the steering committee.

Through interview, a list of individuals who would serve as surrogate parents is available in the district. The district meets the requirements for surrogate parents.

Principle 5 – Individualized Education Program

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a written document for a child with a disability that is developed, reviewed and revised by the IEP team, which includes the parent. The specific areas addressed in principle five are IEP team, IEP content, transition components for secondary IEPs, annual reviews, transition from early intervention program, and IEP related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- Comprehensive plan
- Teacher file reviews
- Student progress data
- Personnel development information
- Surveys
- Budget information

Meets requirements

The steering committee concluded the IEP team includes all the required members and regular educators have access to their students IEPs. Students of transition age and agency representatives are invited to participate in IEP meetings. The course of study includes electives that link the life planning outcomes of the student and a statement of transition services.

Goals are linked to the present levels of performance and consistently contained skill based annual goals. IEPs considered the students participation with non-disabled peers and contains a written justification. IEPs are reviewed annually and contain parent input. The district comprehensive plan procedures address the transition of children to the Part B program.

Needs improvement

The steering committee concluded IEP meetings need to be held consistently within 30 calendar days of receipt of the evaluation results.

The present levels of performance need to consistently link to functional assessment and contain the student's strengths, needs and their involvement/progress in the general curriculum.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting requirements under individual education program as concluded by the steering committee with the exception of goals that link to skill based present levels of performance. Additional information for this area is noted below.

Needs improvement

The monitoring team agrees, IEP meetings need to be held consistently within 30 calendar days of receipt of the evaluation results. Reevaluations conducted for two students exceeded the 30 day reevaluation timeline.

Out of compliance

ARSD 24:05:25:04. Evaluation procedures.

The school district shall ensure a variety of assessment tools and strategies are used to gather relevant functional and development information about the child, including information provided by the parents that may assist in determining whether the child is a child with a disability and content of the child's IEP. The school districts shall ensure the child is assessed in all areas related to the suspected disability, including, as applicable, health, vision, hearing, social and emotional status, general intelligence, academic performance, communicative status, and motor abilities.

ARSD 24:05:27:01.03. Content of individualized education program.

A student's IEP must contain present levels of performance based upon the specific skill areas affected by the student's disability. The present levels of performance are based upon the functional assessment information gathered during the comprehensive evaluation process. Present levels of performance must contain the student's strength, needs, effect of the disability on the student's involvement/progress in the general curriculum and parent input.

Through interview and review of student records, the monitoring team found the district staff did not consistently use functional assessment information to develop student's present levels of performance. This resulted in student present levels of performance lacking skill based strengths, needs and involvement in the general curriculum. For example, the present levels of performance stated, "...needs to gain phonics and sight word skills so he can read at grade level in reading and all other content areas".

Principle 6 – Least Restrictive Environment

After the IEP is developed or reviewed, the IEP team must decide where the IEP services are to be provided. Consideration begins in the general education classroom for school age students. The specific areas addressed in principle six are placement decisions, consent for initial placement, least restrictive environment procedures, preschool children, and LRE related issues.

Steering Committee Self-Assessment Summary

Data sources used:

- File reviews
- Surveys
- General curriculum information
- Budget information

Meets requirements

The steering committee concluded the special education program was developed prior to determining placement on the continuum of least restrictive environments. The percentage of students receiving services in the resource room has increased from 27% to 42% over the past 3 years. General educators have the opportunity to provide input into the IEP and modify and adapt curriculum to meet the needs of student.

Needs improvement

The steering committee concluded educators need additional time, information and supports to implement IEPs, participate in meetings, modify curriculum and consult with special educators.

Validation Results

Meets requirements

The monitoring team agrees with all areas identified as meeting requirement under least restrictive environment as concluded by the steering committee.

Through interview, the monitoring team could not validate the need for additional time, information and supports to implement IEP's, participation in meeting, curriculum modification and consultation with special educators as areas in need of improvement as concluded by the steering committee. General education staff stated they receive help with grading and modifications. The district implements cooperative teaching strategies and they have the flexibility to work together with special educators to address specific student needs.